

City of Gilroy
Sign Ordinance Review Task Force Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2013

PRELIMINARY

Task Force Members Present

Dion Bracco Steve Ashford Katherine Filice Elizabeth Sanford Nancy Robinson

Staff Present

Hipolito Olmos Scott Barron

Members Absent

Peter Arellano Randy Scianna Jaime Rosso Kelly Woodall

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Dion Bracco opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m.
- II. **Public Comment on Non-Agendized Matters:** There were no comments from the public.
- III. **Minutes of January 16, 2013:** Minutes were approved as presented.
- IV. **Correspondence – None.**
- V. **Continued Discussion of Banner Signs:** Code Enforcement Officer Scott Barron presented a handout with staff suggested starting points, as requested by the Task Force. The handout included an overview of existing regulations and proposed regulations that included a revision from the previous meeting from 30 days to 45 days for the allowance to maintain temporary banners, to cover holiday promotions. It also included a table proposing temporary banner size limitations based on building frontage and zoning districts. Officer Barron began by mentioning a discussion raised prior to the meeting regarding a previous request from the Task Force to bring additional information to them proposing that the scale of signs should change with distance from the freeway.

Task Force Member Ashford pointed out that during the previous meeting the task force requested information on the process that has been used in the past to allow signs to face the freeway.

Code Enforcement Officer Hipolito Olmos stated that those signs are generally allowed through the variance process.

Task Force Member Sanford stated that she recalled during the discussion of what signs could be visible from the freeway, Community Development Director Kristi Abrams stated there is a separate part of the code that states what can or can't be done; and that was what we were going to bring back. That way we weren't making recommendations on

things that were not allowed. She thought that was all they were waiting on.

As part of the Banner discussion, Officer Barron referred to Zoning Ordinance section 37.50 that states “no sign shall be mounted on the side of a building abutting and facing a freeway. Chairman Bracco asked, how does this section affect See Grins RV? They are facing the freeway however they are across the street. Task Force Member Sanford stated that they are not considered freeway facing.

Task Force Member Robinson asked about the signs on the back of the Gap facing the freeway. Officer Olmos stated yes those types of permanent signs would need a variance or be part of a PUD to be installed facing the freeway. Task Force Member Robinson mentioned the banners on Golds Gym. Task Force Member Ashford asked, so Golds Gym could request a variance for their banners? Officer Olmos responded yes.

Task force Member Filice stated isn't the question can they have a temporary sign facing the freeway. Chairman Bracco asked, by the rules they can't have a temporary sign facing the freeway. Officer Olmos stated, not currently.

Task Force Member Sanford stated, yes the question is should temporary banners be allowed facing the freeway and if they are allowed; what type of banner and how. Officer Olmos stated, yes if we were to allow them to face the freeway, how large should they be and should we use the table to determine the size.

Officer Barron concluded by reading proposed item 3, which still prohibits banners facing the freeway. Task Force Member Ashford stated, he is in favor of leaving it the way it is. Chairman Bracco asked, so the will of the group is to leave it as it is? Task Force Member Sanford stated, I just want to be clear what is allowable and if so what the process is. After a brief discussion of the Task Force, Chairman Bracco asked again, so we are in agreement, leave it as it is? Officer Barron asked, as it currently is proposed? The other Task Force Members agreed, Chairman Bracco answered, yes.

VI. Presentation of Offsite Residential Open House Signs –Downtown Only: Code Enforcement Officer Olmos made a presentation regarding offsite residential open house signs -Downtown Only that included photos of the intersections, the current sign regulations of the city as well as municipal code requirements regarding obstructing the passage over streets and sidewalks. He also provided information from the California Building Code regarding accessibility requirements for minimum sidewalk clearances and the City Engineers Standard specification on Visibility at Intersections.

Task Force Member Robinson , stated there are two types of signs in the downtown, A-Frame portable open house directional signs that are put out and signs from new construction. Task Force Member Ashford stated that when you look at the intersections with the bulb-outs there is not a good place to put the signs.

Task force Member Filice asked, is what you are proposing only for the downtown? Officer Olmos stated correct. Task Force Member Robinson, stated, but do we have the space at the corner is the issue we were concerned about.

Chairman Bracco asked, what does the Downtown Specific Plan say about these signs. Officer Olmos stated, the Downtown Specific Plan deals primarily with permanent signage

not with temporary signage such as portable a-board signs.

Task Force Member Ashford asked, can we confirm that the Downtown Specific Plan does not address A-Board signs, he understood that it did. In fact he thought it even contained specifics as to how far they can be from the doors. Task Force Member Sanford stated, I thought it was in the other sign code. Chairman Bracco stated, the downtown has its own sign ordinance right.

Task Force Member Filice stated, last week we agreed to allow no more than two portable offsite open house signs per corner. Officer Barron stated, I thought we did not limit the number of offsite open house signs. Task Force Member Sanford and Filice both stated, we did not limit the total number of signs but we did set a limit of two on the number of signs that could be placed at any one intersection except in the downtown.

Task Force Member Ashford stated you can't put the signs in the planters, you can't put them in the ramp areas and they have to be 12 inches from the curb. That leaves very few places. Officer Olmos stated, ADA requires 48 inches clearance for pedestrians; that would still allow some room. Task Force Member Robinson, no responsible agent would put a sign in the crosswalk area anyway. Officer Barron stated, by putting your portable signs only in the areas you mentioned, you would be substantially in compliance with our current code which prohibits them in the sidewalk intersections. Task Force Member Filice stated, she agreed, she would not like the signs in the clear corners. Officer Barron stated, in a previous meeting when discussing the portable signs in the Mama Mia shopping center it was decided to remove the signs from the sidewalks and place them in the planters. Task Force Member Filice stated, that is only along First St, the downtown is a different district they should be allowed on the sidewalks since the whole streetscape is different. Chairman Bracco stated, once they are on private property, the landlords will take care of them. Task Force Member Ashford asked, would they still have to come in at night? Task Force Member Filice stated, yes.

Task Force Member Robinson stated, my proposal is to allow one offsite real estate sign per parcel in the downtown, not in the clear corner areas along Monterey. Chairman Bracco stated, do we need a total number allowed at an intersection? Task Force Member Robinson stated, no. Task Force Member Sanford stated, I think the code takes care of it in terms of allowable clearance. Officer Barron asked, one in the downtown as opposed to one at an intersection? Task Force Member Sanford stated, right. Task Force Member Robinson stated yes one in the downtown.

VII. Flags, Balloons and Streamers: Code Enforcement Officer Scott Barron made a presentation on Flags, balloons and streamers. He presented a handout with staff suggested starting points, as requested by the Task Force. The handout included an overview of existing regulations and proposed regulations.

Task Force Member Filice stated, feather banners should not be allowed in the downtown. After examining the zoning map, Chairman Bracco stated, I think the prohibited area should just be the Historic Downtown. Task Force Member Filice stated, yes, that is my recommendation, they should not be allowed in the Downtown Historic District. Officer Barron asked, so you are saying no feather banners, streamers or pennants in the Downtown Historic District? Task Force Member Filice stated, yes. Officer Barron asked,

what about balloons? Task Force Member Filice stated no balloons. Chairman Bracco agreed.

Officer Barron asked, so what are we doing in the other areas of the City? Task Force Member Filice stated, in the other areas it feels like you are letting them have everything. Officer Barron stated, that is the way it is currently worded. I think we felt the task force was interested in moving in this direction so this was an attempt to create a framework to allow them. Task Force Member Filice stated, I think this would be chaos. I feel comfortable with feather banners however when we also say you can have balloons and streamers, it feels like a lot. Chairman Bracco stated, then it needs to be one or the other.

Task Force Member Filice stated, we need to exclude the auto dealerships from this, because where the dealerships are located it would be ok. Officer Olmos asked, any auto dealer? Task Force Member Filice stated, no, just at the auto mall. Task Force Member Robinson stated, in the auto industry they are commonplace. Chairman Bracco stated maybe they should just be allowed for the franchised dealers? Task Force Member Filice stated, I think it has more to do with the geography of the city not just on what they are selling. Task Force Member Sanford stated, because of where they are located they are not bothering anyone else. That makes it more appropriate; without creating a whole new district on the map, just calling it out in terms of geography should solve the problem of why it should be allowed for them. Task Force Member Filice stated, and it has to do with autos. Task Force Member Sanford stated, yes. Task Force Member Filice stated, the decision is for auto dealers in this geographic area. Officer Barron asked, they could have feather banners or streamers or pennants or balloons? Task Force Member Filice stated yes pretty much what they want. Task Force Member Ashford stated, I am for all this except the balloons. Maybe the used car dealers could come in and get a variance for to put up the streamers if they want them.

Task Force Member Filice stated; what if we limited the area of temporary signage, so that if you have a banner, an A-frame or feather banner, we could say per your store frontage you could this many square feet of such signs all together. You may not have enough square feet to use them all at the same time, but you mix and match as you go, so that sometimes you may have your A-frame out or feather banner or banner out at your choice.

Task Force Member Sanford stated, I think this code needs to reflect there are new ways of advertising, feather banners were not available before and they are very popular and if you are looking for something with movement then feather banners are it because streamers have the potential to not look very good. I believe it would be a fair compromise. I believe business owners would prefer a simple method such as can I put this up or not.

Task Force Member Filice stated, could we come up with a total square feet that could remain up. Task Force Member Sanford stated, I like the idea of stuff coming down, that way the whole First street corridor is not filled with banners and they are more likely to keep them in repair if they take them down regularly. Chairman Bracco stated, I don't think businesses will want to put them up for so many days then take them down for so many days, because they will say, that's their business. Officer Barron stated, the idea was that the feather banners were for special promotions and that they were not to be used constantly. Task Force Member Robinson stated but they are being used constantly. The used car dealers are the most prolific offenders.

Task Force Member Sanford stated, you have convinced me that it is inconvenient to put up and take down the feather banners, but if we did that I think it will help with some of the visual so there is not a constant tunnel of flags as you are driving in. But if that is too hard to enforce; how do you know when the two weeks start. If we limit them to no more than 1 per 25 feet of frontage and limit them to no more than one per 15 feet along the road, even if they stay up all the time, I think that will help with the visual but it could be tough to enforce. Officer Barron stated, yes it could be but I would go by what would work best visually.

Chairman Bracco asked, so what's the will of the group, limit them to the lineal footage of the frontage? Task Force Member Sanford stated, I think so.

Task Force Member Sanford stated, couldn't we just simplify it by saying no more than one per 10 or fifteen feet on the owners property to implement a spacing.

Chairman Bracco asked, so let's make a decision on feather banners.

Task Force Member Sanford stated, I think it will be easier to enforce and clearer to business owners if you use spacing rather than lineal footage determine number.

Task Force Member Filice stated; I think 25 feet is better, and can we say no to streamers and pennants. Task Force Member Sanford stated yes, streamers and pennants have been around for a long time, the argument can be made it's out with the old and in with the new.

Task Force Member Filice stated; so the only thing we have changed is to allow feather banners to the tune of one every 25 feet.

Officer Barron asked, so are we going to limit the number of days they can be up.

Chairman Bracco and Task Force Member Filice answered, no; Task Force Member Sanford stated, I think the spacing compromise was used instead.

Task Force Member Filice asked, so are we going to limit the total square footage that includes their banners, a-boards, and feather banners or not? Can I have a banner, feather banner and a-frame in my little 25 foot storefront. Chairman Bracco stated, I think if you have a banner up that is something different.

Chairman Bracco stated, I think if you have feather banners up you shouldn't have an a-board sign up, you should choose one or the other. Task Force Member Sanford stated, I think one or the other is fine. Task Force Member Filice stated, an a-frame or a feather banner.

Officer Barron asked, so you're ok with the prohibition on inflatable objects and balloons?

Task Force Member Sanford asked, what about those things that are way up there, are they inflatable objects or balloons. Task Force Member Robinson stated, we're going to leave them alone. Officer Barron stated, if we create a special district for the dealers we could allow them. Task Force Member Robinson stated, I would like to allow balloons in the special district for the auto dealers.

Task Force Member Filice stated, a-board signs are the same in the downtown except one realtor sign is allowed. Officer Barron asked, how did we decide which realtor gets the one downtown a-board sign. Task Force Member Filice and Task Force Member Sanford stated, each realtor gets one. Task Force Member Robinson stated, if there isn't room then we could pick up the signs.

- VIII. Determine Wrap Up and Community Outreach Meetings Schedule:** The Wrap Up meeting tentatively scheduled for March 13, 2013 was confirmed by Chairman Bracco and Task Force Member Kat Filice.
- IX. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 pm by Chairman Bracco.